



COUNCIL MINUTES

October 9, 2008

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on October 9, 2008 at 7:32 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Scott Smith
Alex Finter
Dina Higgins
Kyle Jones
Dennis Kavanaugh
Scott Somers

COUNCIL ABSENT

Dave Richins

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Debbie Spinner

(Mayor Smith excused Councilmember Richins from the entire meeting.)

1. Hear a presentation and discuss transit and light rail alternatives for Mesa and proposed general regulations for light rail transit service.

Deputy Transportation Director Mike James introduced Larry Engleman, Safety and Security Director with Valley Metro (Metro). He also acknowledged staff, and in particular, Deputy City Attorney Donna Bronski and Police Legal Advisor Cathy Bowman, for their efforts and hard work relative to the drafting of an ordinance that would be discussed shortly.

Mr. James displayed a PowerPoint presentation (A copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and reported that at the October 20, 2008 Regular Council meeting, the Council would be asked to consider an ordinance that would provide general regulations relating to use restrictions and conduct on public transit vehicles. He explained that because the Metro light rail system will open to the public on December 27th of this year, it is necessary that the City of Mesa adopt the ordinance prior to that time. Mr. James stated that Phoenix and Tempe have drafted similar ordinances to ensure that the application of the fare enforcement program and safety conditions are consistently applied throughout the 20-mile rail system.

In response to a question from Mayor Smith, Mr. Engelman clarified that the Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa ordinances "are virtually identical" and were drafted by a committee composed of representatives from all three communities (i.e., City Attorney's Office and Police Department).

Deputy City Attorney Donna Bronski added that the only difference relates to granting staff the ability to "fit" the ordinance into the Mesa City Code. She assured the Council that all of the substantive issues in Mesa's ordinance are the same as those in Phoenix and Tempe's ordinances.

Mr. James further noted that the ordinance would establish general regulations to enable on-board fare inspection; secure safety; identify unlawful activities; identify when users are restricted from riding the light rail system (from one day to one year); and establish penalties for identified civil violations ranging from \$50 to \$500.

Mayor Smith thanked Mr. James for the presentation.

Mr. James stated that the second part of today's presentation is an update regarding the Central Mesa Corridor High Capacity Transit (HCT) Study. He introduced Mark Soronson, Planning/Environmental Manager for Valley Metro, and Wulf Grote, Metro's Director of Project Development, who were prepared to address the Council relative to this item.

Mr. Soronson displayed a PowerPoint presentation (A copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and provided a brief overview of the Central Mesa Corridor HCT Study. His comments included, but were not limited to, the following: that the above-referenced study is also known as the Central Mesa Alternatives Analysis (Note: Metro is following a Federal process and "Alternatives Analysis" is the legal title of the process); that Metro has been engaged in the Central Mesa Corridor HCT Study for more than a year and has completed a number of steps in the process; and that Metro is currently in the Tier 2 Analysis, the purpose of which is to establish "detailed definition" with regard to conceptual and environmental impacts, cost and ridership of each transit option being evaluated.

Mr. Soronson also spoke regarding the scope of the Central Mesa Corridor HCT Study which includes a number of components such as the Public Involvement Program, Economic Development and Market Analysis, Environmental Impact Statement, Conceptual Engineering, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts Report, which must be completed in order to obtain Federal funding.

Discussion ensued relative to the Tier 2 Alternatives (two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Main Street alternatives and four Light Rail Transit (LRT) Main Street alternatives), that would extend from the Sycamore light rail station to Horne/Mesa Drive. (See Attachment 1); that an additional option would be to transition the light rail line north or south to 1st Street or 1st Avenue; that Metro is considering locations at Horne and Mesa Drive for Park and Ride lots; that also included in the Tier 2 Alternatives is an express bus route from Superstition Springs Center to Sycamore or Horne; and Metro's Public Involvement Program regarding the Central Mesa Corridor HCT Study, which includes, but is not limited to: public meetings, a business forum, meetings with property and business owners, updates to Mesa civic associations and City departments and staff, door-to-door canvassing, and a telephone hotline.

Mr. Soronson stated that on October 14, 2008, at 6:00 p.m., Metro will host a public meeting at the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT). He said that the purpose of the meeting is to provide an overview of the Tier 2 Alternatives, the results of the analysis (i.e., engineering highlights, preliminary capital cost estimates and preliminary ridership forecast), outline the next steps in the process, and solicit input from the community. Mr. Soronson explained that subsequent to that time, Metro would make recommendations to the Council regarding future transit options.

Mayor Smith stated that as the process moves forward and Main Street, 1st Street and 1st Avenue alignment options are considered, he would like to get as specific as possible in

addressing some of the real concerns of our downtown merchants. He stated that Main Street through downtown is a unique area as compared to other sites along the rail line. He suggested that there may be opportunities to explore expedited construction schedules because of the Pepper Street and 1st Avenue access to many of the downtown stores and also the ability to perhaps zone the construction. Mayor Smith requested that Metro provide the merchants as much detail as possible including, for instance, information related to the potential for accelerating light rail construction in the area or narrowing the construction gap.

Mayor Smith further commented that he reviewed Metro's preliminary cost estimates and noted that he is having a difficult time reconciling "some of the things he is hearing about the description of the routes" concerning those estimates. He stated that "it doesn't pass the smell test" relative to the differences between the various options (i.e., Main Street, 1st Street and 1st Avenue). Mayor Smith said that one of the arguments in support of selecting Main Street as the most appropriate alignment is the fact that during prior construction in the area, the utilities were moved and in his opinion, there would be less of a challenge in closing down the area for an extended period of time. He indicated, however, that if either 1st Street or 1st Avenue were selected as the most viable option, Metro would most likely be required to perform more infrastructure work, lay additional track and potentially disturb property. Mayor Smith further stated that the preliminary cost estimates do not seem to reflect the above-cited differences which, in his opinion, could be significant. He requested that as the planning process moves forward and Metro prepares the cost estimates for the various transit options, that the agency provide a more detailed explanation of why the costs may or may not be different.

Mayor Smith also expressed appreciation to Metro for its efforts and hard work in making the planning process as least intrusive as possible for the stakeholders.

2. Hear reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

There were no reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

3. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Saturday, October 11, 2008, 8:00 a.m. – District 6 Pancake Breakfast at Fire Station 212

Thursday, October 16, 2008, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, October 16, 2008, 9:00 a.m. – Community & Neighborhood Services Committee

Saturday, October 18, 2008 – GAIN Event

Thursday, October 23, 2008, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Thursday, October 23, 2008, 3:45 p.m. – Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for new Crime Lab

Saturday, October 25, 2008, 10:00 a.m. – City Hall at the Mall at Superstition Springs

Mr. Brady informed the Council that the City of Mesa has been tentatively notified by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that it would receive \$9.6 million for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). He explained that today and tomorrow, staff is receiving training regarding the process by which the program would be administered. Mr. Brady advised that the City must apply for the funding and said that the application is scheduled to be submitted to HUD on November 24, 2008. Mr. Brady added that it is anticipated that staff would make a presentation to the Council in the near future to discuss the NSP application process.

Environmental Programs Administrator Scott Bouchie addressed the Council and provided a brief update of the City of Mesa's Household Hazardous Waste event which was held on October 4th. He reported that 1,060 residents brought materials to the event and noted that the City collected over 15,000 gallons of household hazardous waste, including 7,000 gallons of latex paint. Mr. Bouchie explained that the paint would be available to residents as part of the Solid Waste Department's Paint Reuse Program and is also used by street maintenance as part of the City's graffiti removal program. He also stated that staff collected over 10,000 pounds of electronics, including televisions and various household appliances. Mr. Bouchie added that information is available on the City's web site regarding future Household Hazardous Waste events.

Discussion ensued relative to the proper disposal of outdated prescription medication.

Mayor Smith thanked Mr. Bouchie for the update.

4. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

5 Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 7:58 a.m.

SCOTT SMITH, MAYOR

ATTEST:

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 9th day of October 2008. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

LINDA CROCKER, CITY CLERK